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ABSTRACT

Alternative teacher certification programs allow school districts, accredited independent schools, boards of cooperative services, and institutions of higher education to develop and implement school-based preparation for teachers. This handbook is designed to assist individual organizations and groups to develop alternate teacher certification programs that comply with the alternative teacher licensing program established by the Colorado General Assembly and the State Board of Education. Topics covered include: the definition of an alternative teacher education program; the roles of the designated agency, the advisory council, the support team, and the mentor teacher; teacher instruction, supervision, and evaluation in the program; fees; program monitoring; minority fellowships; and designated agency reporting. Effective practices used by other states are described in each section. Appendices include an alternative teacher program Statement of Eligibility form, employment and license recommendation forms, and an application sequence for alternative teacher licensing. (ND)

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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
201 EAST COLFAX
DENVER, COLORADO 80203

Colorado Alternative Teacher Licensing Program

A HANDBOOK FOR DEVELOPING APPROVED DESIGNATED AGENCY TRAINING AND SUPERVISION PROGRAMS

March, 1995

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Colorado Alternative Teacher Licensing Program

A Handbook for Developing Approved Designated Agency
Training and Supervision Programs

Table of Contents

		Page
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Alternative Teacher Programs	2
3.	Who is Eligible?	2
4.	Role of the Designated Agency	3
5.	Role of the Advisory Council	4
6.	Role of the Support Team	4
7.	Role of the Mentor Teacher	5
8.	Alternative Teacher Instruction	6
9.	Alternative Teacher Supervision	7
10.	Alternative Teacher Evaluations	9
11.	Teacher Licensing	9
12.	Alternative Teacher Fees	9
13.	Program Monitoring	10
14.	Minority Fellowships	10
15.	Designated Agency Reporting	11
16.	Questions and Answers	12
17.	Appendices	

INTRODUCTION

An alternative teacher licensing program has been established by the Colorado General Assembly and the State Board of Education. It allows school districts, accredited independent schools, boards of cooperative services (BOCS) and institutions of higher education to develop and implement school-based preparation programs for teachers. With adoption of this program, Colorado joins a growing number of states which have developed alternative routes for licensure.

Programs are intended to attract talented individuals into public education who are recent liberal arts graduates, non-public school teachers, college professors and others seeking career changes. Provision is also made through minority teacher fellowships to attract talented minorities into the profession.

The law does not require alternative teacher programs, but Colorado schools are encouraged to develop them. Alternative programs offer districts a way to employ talented individuals who might not otherwise be available for teaching. Local districts provide supervision and training for alternative teachers.

This handbook is designed to assist individual organizations and groups to develop alternative teacher programs. Effective practices used by other states are found in each **SUGGESTIONS** section. Successful programs can be developed and implemented by using an organization's or consortium's expertise combined with the suggestions.

For assistance, contact John Walker, Office of Professional Services, at (303) 866-6923.

Alternative Teacher Programs

Proposals for alternative teacher programs are submitted to the Colorado State Board of Education for approval. Programs can be developed and implemented by school districts, accredited independent schools, BOCS and institutions of higher education. Each approved alternative teacher program training site is called a **designated agency.**

Designated agencies must provide a one-year program of teaching and training for the alternative teacher which includes:

* 225 clock hours of professional education to include training in dropout prevention and the recognition of child abuse or neglect. Training may be modified based on assessments of the alternative teacher's knowledge, skills, and experience;

* Supervision and guidance by members of a support team, including a mentor teacher;

* Performance evaluations conducted consistent with the district's adopted evaluation system.

All approved programs will include a process by which performance evaluations will be conducted. They also specify the expectations of the designated agency concerning the accomplishments, goals and objectives of the program, benefits the teacher would expect to receive from program participation, and plans for minority teacher recruitment.

After successfully completing an approved alternative teacher licensing program, the candidate is recommended by the designated agency for a Provisional Teacher License.

Who is Eligible?

A candidate interested in employment as an alternative teacher must:

* Hold a baccalaureate degree from a fully accredited institution of higher education.

* Provide evidence of passing scores on the Colorado licensing assessments including basic skills, oral English proficiency, liberal arts and sciences, and content knowledge.

* Meet subject matter requirements and be confirmed as having the necessary knowledge of the subject matter to teach in the appropriate endorsement area.

* Agree to participate fully in an approved alternative teacher program.

The Educator Licensing Office of the Colorado Department of Education evaluates the credentials of all Alternative Licensure applicants. Approved candidates are issued a Statement of Eligibility (SOE) (See Appendix A) to be presented to a Designated Agency when seeking employment.

Role of the Designated Agency

An approved designated agency (or participating school district) employs a pre-approved teacher candidate under a one-year alternative teacher contract and provides program supervision and training.

Upon employing the teacher, the designated agency notifies the Department with a Statement of Assurance of Employment (see Appendix B). The Department will then issue the teacher a one-year alternative license.

A copy of the alternative teacher's contract, including terms and conditions, is provided to the Department at the beginning of employment. This contract:

* Explains how the teacher's contract differs from those of regular first-year teachers;

* States the salary and benefits to be paid to the teacher;

* States the fees charged to the teacher, if any, to defray the costs of delivering the alternative program;

* Describes conditions unique to the responsibilities of the alternative teacher, including the point at which the teacher is expected to assume sole responsibility for teaching a class or classroom;

* Explains the procedures to be used should a termination of the teacher be necessary during the first three months of employment.

The designated agency notifies the Department of any changes in the alternative teacher's employment status with the Alternative Teacher Change in Employment Status form (see Appendix C).

Role of the Advisory Council

For purposes of carrying out an alternative teacher program approved by the State Board of Education, a designated agency shall establish an advisory council. The council shall include, at a minimum, representatives of each school district, accredited independent school, and BOCS involved, at least one mentor teacher, and a representative of any accepted institution of higher education involved with such designated agency.

Duties of the council include advising the designated agency on the organization, management and operation of the approved alternative teacher program.

Role of the Support Team

The alternative teacher support team is established by the designated agency. The team includes a mentor teacher, the building principal, and a representative of the cooperating accepted institution of higher education.

Upon the request of the designated agency, the State Board of Education may authorize a waiver regarding the composition of the support team if the Board determines it is necessary to accomplish the purposes of an alternative teacher program.

Duties of the support team include:

* Evaluating the prior learning and experiences of the teacher;
* Developing the planned instruction and activities appropriate to the teacher which meet State Board of Education standards;
* Assuring that the major portion of the teacher's assignment is in the approved subject matter area;
* Planning the delivery of instruction to the teacher which includes, prior to the beginning of the school year, an orientation to schools, student populations, policies and procedures and teacher responsibilities;
* Determining at what point the teacher may have increasing responsibility for classroom instruction;
* Evaluating the teacher's progress;
* Evaluating the teacher's demonstrated teaching proficiencies;
* Making recommendations to the employing agency for the issuance of a Provisional Teacher License.

SUGGESTIONS:

The advisory council should review operating procedures of the alternative teacher program with support team members. Members need to understand and accept their roles and responsibilities.

Support team members and the teacher should meet regularly. This may require release time or scheduling of common planning periods.

Role of the Mentor Teacher

The mentor teacher serves as a member of the support team. The mentor provides on-going counseling and supervision of the alternative teacher and has responsibility for representing school faculty and parents in evaluating and making recommendations regarding the licensure of the alternative teacher.

Criteria for the selection of the mentor teacher requires the following:

* General consensus of professional opinion related to outstanding teaching and school leadership;
* Ability to provide exemplary modeling and counseling to the alternative teacher;
* Level of experience, educational attainment, proper licensure and endorsement.

The alternative program must ensure the proper discharge of duties by the mentor teacher which may include training in mentoring and performance evaluation. Provisions may also include adequate time and/or compensation for planning, observation and conferences with the alternative teacher.

SUGGESTIONS:

The mentor teacher is a key element in the success of the program. The mentor teacher's role in the alternative program should be carefully examined. Mentors will need to be adequately supported and must have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Mentor training should be scheduled prior to working with the alternative teacher. Examples of training include preparation for work with the beginning teacher, orientation to the mentor role and alternative program, time management, support for good teaching, reinforcement of the habits for good teaching and adult supervision.

The mentor teacher should establish a relationship with the teacher that encourages questions and facilitates communication. Mentoring requires regular conferences with the teacher. During conferences, the mentor can discuss strengths and weaknesses, provide teaching techniques and suggestions for classroom management.

Observations should be formative to provide insight and suggestions for improvement. Consider that the most successful alternative programs are designed so that the mentor is a trusted colleague.

Alternative teachers and mentors should hold endorsements in the same field. Where this is not possible, teachers should be placed with mentors in similar fields.

Arrangements should be made so that the mentor teacher can provide intensive supervision during the initial teaching period. The teacher should have time to observe the mentor and other teachers and teach under direct mentor supervision.

Alternative Teacher Instruction

Each designated agency's training program and its delivery is based on 225 clock hours of instruction. The hours may be increased or decreased based on the support team's assessment of the teacher's knowledge and skills in the prescribed areas.

In alternative instruction programs, training focuses on knowledge of:

* The history and development of public education including an understanding of public school leadership and management;
* Growth and development patterns from birth through adolescence and application to the teaching-learning process;
* Theories and specific teaching-learning objectives and application to the current teaching-learning process;
* Teaching strategies and ways of learning which utilize the ability to diagnose, prescribe and evaluate student progress based on individual and exceptional student needs;
* The ability to use resources to facilitate student learning, including the use of family and community resources in the teaching-learning process;

- Classroom organization and management techniques;
- Rights and responsibilities of all those involved in the public school educational process;
- Dropout prevention and the recognition and reporting of child abuse or neglect.

SUGGESTIONS:

The orientation provided by the designated agency should include an introduction to the roles and responsibilities of the alternative teacher, mentor teacher and support team, the classroom, school facilities, district or school operation and resources, district policies and other pertinent first-year teacher information.

It is suggested that a portion of the instructional program be delivered during the summer prior to the academic year, with the remainder of the instruction provided during the contract year.

When the designated agency chooses the method for delivery of instruction, consider selecting experts in the field, college instructors and district practitioners. Time should be spent discussing how alternative teacher instruction differs from that of more traditionally trained teachers. Instructors need to model effective teaching practices. Designated agencies may consider using telecommunications in the delivery of instruction.

Instructors should provide regular progress reports to the support team. The team should be encouraged to communicate with the instructors regarding additional assistance needed by the teacher.

It should be made clear that alternative teachers are required to attend all instructional and training sessions.

Alternative Teacher Supervision

The supervision of an alternative teacher is conducted by a mentor teacher and members of the support team.

The support team may, during the first three months of employment, recommend the termination of the alternative teacher contract. Should such action be taken, it is not subject to appeal.

SUGGESTIONS:

Initially, the mentor and alternative teacher work together in a classroom. The mentor teacher should be in charge until the determination is made, by the support team, that the alternative teacher can assume increasing responsibility for classes or a classroom.

During the first week, the alternative teacher may spend time observing or working with small groups and teaching a lesson at the end of the week. During the second and third weeks, an increasing proportion of the classroom time should be spent teaching. By the fourth week, the support team assesses the teacher's readiness to assume a full teaching load.

Supervised teaching should be extended if the needs of the alternative teacher dictate. The success of an alternative program is based on this critical period of intensive support and assistance.

After the initial mentor supervision is complete, the support team should provide ongoing assistance. A member of the support team should visit the alternative teacher's class at least once per week for approximately 10 weeks. The amount of time may be extended depending upon the support team's assessment of the teacher and the need for additional support and assistance. Each visit should be for a full class period and be preceded and followed by conferences. The purpose of these visits should be to assist, instruct, coach and recommend improvements.

Prior to the third month of employment, the support team should meet to review the progress and performance of the alternative teacher. At this time, the support team may recommend termination of the contract.

Assuming the contract is not terminated, additional observations should be conducted at least once a month for the remainder of the contract year. These visits may be conducted by a member of the support team. It is important that the alternative teacher receive the benefit of all points of view by meeting regularly with all members of the support team.

If a situation arises during the initial supervision period where the mentor teacher is unavailable, the designated agency may assign members of the support team to share the mentoring responsibilities. Members selected could include curriculum supervisors, department chairpersons, principals and other experienced practitioners.

Whenever possible, consider scheduling identical planning periods for the mentor and alternative teacher. Questions can be answered quickly with this arrangement. The teacher should keep a daily classroom journal that can be reviewed by the mentor teacher if it is impossible to meet. This system should not, however, take the place of person-to-person contact and conferences.

A designated agency may want to use other certified personnel to supervise a classroom while the mentor and teacher work together. The fee charged to the alternative teacher for guidance and support by a mentor could be used to defray these costs.

Alternative Teacher Evaluations

The teacher has regular performance evaluations while participating in the alternative program.

SUGGESTIONS:

Performance evaluations should be completed at least as frequently as those of beginning teachers. The principal or other district administrator should conduct the evaluations using the district's adopted evaluation system.

Teacher Licensing

Upon the successful completion of the alternative program, the designated agency recommends the teacher for a Colorado Provisional Teacher License.

The designated agency notifies the Department with a Recommendation for Provisional License form (see Appendix D).

Alternative Teacher Fees

The designated agency is allowed to charge fees to the alternative teacher to generate sufficient revenue to approximate the direct and indirect costs for the administration of the program.

SUGGESTIONS:

Compensation should be provided to mentor teachers and others directly involved in the program. Consideration should be given to the costs for additional personnel needs, instructional supplies and resources.

Program Monitoring

Teacher Licensing is a function of the State. The Department of Education has a responsibility to monitor teacher preparation that leads to licensure. For example, the State Board of Education uses teams to visit and assess the preparation programs offered by colleges and universities in Colorado.

Similarly, the alternative teacher program will be monitored. This monitoring may include review of training, supervision and instruction programs, on-going district plan review and approval, visits to training sites, schools, and on-going follow-up with the mentors, alternative teachers and designated agency contact persons.

SUGGESTIONS:

Each designated agency will need to select a contact person to be a liaison with the Department.

Minority Fellowships

The Department awards, based upon funds available, fellowships to the most promising minority alternative teachers. Teachers are eligible for fellowships as soon as they are employed in an approved program. The fellowships are $1,500 awards.

The Commissioner of Education appoints a panel each year to select recipients of minority teacher fellowships. The panel will include:

* The Commissioner or his designee;
* A representative from an advisory council of an approved designated agency;
* A representative from a contributor of gifts, bequests or grants;
* A mentor teacher with experience in an alternative teacher program;
* An alternative teacher who has successfully completed an approved program.

Minority alternative teachers who wish to be candidates for a fellowship, must:

* be participants in approved alternative teacher licensing programs;
* be recognized as representatives from a racial/ethnic group;

* be current residents of the State of Colorado;

* be nominated by their designated agency as promising alternative teachers.

* provide evidence of effective communication and interpersonal skills needed to work successfully with students, parents and colleagues.

Designated Agency Reporting

Designated agencies shall provide to the Department, no later than October 15 of each year, information necessary for the Department to report to the General Assembly in January. Annual report forms will be provided by the Department to each designated agency to collect the following information:

* Number of alternative teachers who applied for employment with the designated agency and the number employed;

* Number of alternative teachers who completed alternative programs and were recommended for licensure;

* Rate of attrition of alternative teachers compared to the rate of attri - tion of non-alternative teachers;

* Costs incurred in the preparation of alternative teachers for issuance of a Provisional Teacher license. Costs can include, but not be limited to, the costs for providing curriculum, supervision and other direct or indirect costs.

* The numbers of minority alternative teachers recruited including the manner in which the minority recruitment occurred;

* Related information on alternative teacher programs, and from alternative teachers as needed, to report on the implementation and effectiveness of this program.

ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PROGRAM

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. *Is every school district, independent school, BOCS and institution of higher education required to develop and implement an alternative teacher program?*

A. No. The law does not require alternative teacher programs. However, it is hoped that Colorado schools, independently or as part of a consortium, will develop alternative teacher programs.

Q. *Who is eligible to be employed as an alternative teacher?*

A. To be approved for participation in an alternative teacher certification program, candidates must: hold a baccalaureate degree from a fully accredited institution of higher education, complete the test requirements, possess the necessary knowledge for teaching in an appropriate endorsement area, agree to participate fully in an approved alternative teacher program, and meet the Colorado fingerprinting requirements.

Q. *How will designated agencies know which candidates have met the requirements?*

A. Candidates who meet the requirements will be issued a Statement of Eligibility by the Department. This statement should be presented to the designated agency prior to an offer of employment. The positions for which the candidate is eligible to be employed are indicated on the Statement.

Q. *Is the alternative teacher employed by the school district?*

A. Yes. Designated agencies interview and may employ approved candidates. Upon employment, a 12-month Alternative Teacher License is issued. The teacher is employed under the terms and conditions of an alternative teacher contract developed by the employing agency.

Candidates will contact the designated agencies directly and inquire into employment opportunities. Designated agencies may contact the Department for a list of approved candidates.

Q. *Are alternative teachers paid a salary?*

A. Yes. Alternative teachers work under an alternative teacher contract and are salaried employees of the school district.

Q. *How will the designated agency fund the program?*

A. A designated agency may bear the full cost, seek funding support from outside agencies, or charge fees to the alternative teacher to approximate the direct and indirect costs of developing and administering the program.

Q. *Is the district obligated to employ the alternative teacher at the completion of the training program?*

A. No. The alternative teacher enjoys no special status or right to further employment in the district.

Q. *Is assistance available as these programs are developed and implemented?*

A. Yes. The Department will assist school districts, accredited independent schools, BOCS and institutions of higher education in program development and operation.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

STATE OF COLORADO

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1704
FAX (303) 830-0793

William T. Randall
Commissioner of Education
Richard A. Laughlin
Deputy Commissioner

ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PROGRAM

STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY

This Statement of Eligibility may be used by the holder **ONLY** to seek employment as an alternative teacher in an approved alternative teacher program. This Statement of Eligibility is not a teacher license for salary purposes.

This is to certify that John Doe
SS# 000-00-0000 is qualified to seek employment as an alternative teacher in Colorado in positions related to the following endorsement:

K-12 ART EDUCATION

OR

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

An alternative teacher license will be issued when the candidate has been offered a position to teach. The major portion of the assignment must be in the subject matter or field identified above.

Effective Date August 5, 1995

Expiration Date August 5, 1998

for the Alternative Teacher Program
****This is not a valid Teacher License**

Appendix B

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE OF EMPLOYMENT

The purpose of this form is for the district or independent school to inform the Department when an alternative teacher has been employed.

This is to certify that _____

SSN# _____, has been offered a position to teach in the following field or subject _____
(Must match authorized field or subject which appears on the Statement of Eligibility.)

This position is effective _____

School District _____

Superintendent / Designee _____
Signature

Address _____

City / Zip Code _____

School Assignment _____

Address _____

City / Zip Code _____

Designated Agency _____
Signature

County _____

Telephone (____) _____ Date _____

This signed statement, with attached teacher contract and coversheet, should be sent to:

Educator Licensing
Colorado Department of Education
201 E. Colfax
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-6628

No alternative teacher license may be issued until this form has been received. The license is the legal authorization for the contract and to pay the teacher for services.

Return white copy to Educator Licensing.

ATP 1/95 White - Educator Licensing Copy Yellow - Designated Agency File Copy

ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT STATUS

_____ ceased employment in the alternative teacher program at this school, effective _____

The alternative teacher completed _____ weeks of full-time teaching and completed _____ hours of instruction.

The reason for leaving:

_____ resignation

_____ dismissal

_____ other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

_____
Principal Signature Date

School Name _____

Address _____

City / Zip Code _____

Designated Agency _____
Signature

Telephone _____

This signed statement should be sent to:

Educator Licensing
Colorado Department of Education
201 E. Colfax
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-6628

ATP 1/95 White - Educator Licensing Copy Yellow - Designated Agency File Copy

cde
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Alternative Teacher Program

RECOMMENDATION FOR PROVISIONAL TEACHER LICENSE

This is to certify that _____

SSN# _____, was admitted to the alternative teacher program on _____ (date) and successfully completed a state-approved program on _____ (date). This candidate is recommended for a Provisional Teacher License. Candidate's teaching assignment was at the _____ (grade level) and was in _____ (subject area).

Support Team Members: _____ (Signature)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Signature)

School/District _____

Address _____ (Street) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

Telephone (____) _____ Date _____

Designated Agency _____ (Signature) Title _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

_____ Date _____

This signed statement should be sent to:

Educator Licensing
Colorado Department of Education
201 E. Colfax
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-6628

NOTE: If the teacher is not eligible for a license recommendation, do not sign the above statement. Attach an explanatory statement.

ATP 1/95 White - Educator Licensing Copy Yellow - Designated Agency File Copy

Appendix E

Application Sequence for Alternative Teacher Licensing

1. Application submitted with all required materials. Applicant declares a subject area for endorsement.

2. Academic preparation is evaluated based upon Colorado State Board of Education Standards for each subject area. If an applicant has a major in the endorsement subject area chosen, there will be no deficiencies in the academic preparation.

   If the academic preparation is not a major of the endorsement (subject) area chosen, there will be deficiencies which will be noted on the evaluation memorandum. Applicants will have to address these deficiencies by coursework or portfolio.

3. Application is returned to the applicant with evaluation memorandum, a PLACE™ (Program for Licensing Assessments for Colorado Educators) assessment bulletin, and test objectives for the educator content field. All deficiencies and assessments must be complete before re-submission. The assessments are: Basic Skills, Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Educator Content Field.

4. Re-submitted application is received from applicant with all requirements met. The Statement of Eligibility is then issued with a Designated Agency List.

5. The Contact Person at the Designated Agency will submit Contract, Cover Sheet and Statement of Assurance of Employment for the candidate to CDE after the position has been obtained. CDE then issues a one-year Alternative Teacher License.

6. Applicant enters the Alternative Teacher Training Program, is evaluated and recommended to CDE on a form titled: Recommendation for Provisional Teacher License.

7. Before issuance of the Provisional teacher License, applicant must pass the Professional Knowledge section of the PLACE™ .

8. After passing the Professional Knowledge section, applicant receives a Provisional Teacher License.

Colorado State Board of Education

Patricia M. Hayes, Chairman.....6th Congressional District

Thomas M. Howerton, Vice Chairman.....5th Congressional District

John Evans.....Member-at-Large

Royce D. Forsyth.....1st Congressional District

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